

SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS

PHOENIX YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY MOVEMENT

2001-2002 Grant Amount: **\$5 Million**

Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District

P.O. Box 654; Crossett, AR 71635

Tel: (870) 364-1676; Fax: (870) 364-1779

Project Director, Toyce Newton: phoenix@cei.net

Website: <http://yoarkansas.org>

Mission and Vision

To provide youth of Chicot and Desha counties, age 14-21, with the support to obtain gainful employment by involving them in youth development activities, educational opportunities, job readiness trainings and offering placement services.

Program Overview

Our goal is to place youth in meaningful long-term employment, significantly decrease the dropout rate, and increase post-secondary opportunities for youth and % of those attending.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

- Governor visited Arkansas City site in February 2002
- Developed partnership with Temple Products
- Youth participants were screened to serve on Governor's Board for Drug/Alcohol Prevention
- Participants helped in creating website and newsletter: yoarkansas.org
- Over 200 participants are currently receiving post-secondary and college tuition assistance
- Drama Club/Tae Kwon Do/ Quilting classes began October 2001
- Youth met with Senator Blanche Lincoln to explain program

KEY PARTNERS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **Mid Delta Workforce Alliance:** Academic & GED Training, job placement, job readiness & life skills training, internships, apprenticeships, and school –to- work opportunities
- **Temple Products:** Have had up to 38 youth participants employed this year
- **Boys and Girls Club of McGehee:** state-of-the-art facility provides basketball, volleyball, computers and mentorship
- **Great Rivers Technical Institute:** Academic, vocational training, and job placement assistance
- **Desha and Chicot County Department of Human Services:** provides recruitment and assist with wraparound services
- **Arkansas City, Eudora, Delta Special, Dermott, Dumas, McGehee, Lake Village School Districts**
- **Dumas 21st Century Community Center:** Basic academic and tutorial training
- **Job Shadowing performed by approximately 280 participants:** Montgomery Accounting Firm, Federal Mogul, Leer Industries, Potlatch, Dumas Nursing Home, Dermott Police Dept, Arkansas Highway Dept., etc.
- **Juvenile Court Partnership for referral:** Court officials refer students for job readiness training, mentoring, and tutoring
- **Mentoring/Tutoring:** All youth have access to mentors and tutors
- **Desha and Chicot County Newspapers:** Established "YO! Corner" to highlight YO! program activities